

Statement on First Anniversary of the March 11 Disaster in Japan
March 9, 2012

As we mark 1 year since the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan, Michelle and I join all Americans in honoring the memory of the 19,000 victims lost or missing. We continue to be inspired by the Japanese people, who faced unimaginable loss with extraordinary fortitude. Their resilience and determination to rebuild stronger than before is an example for us all.

Since the first moments of the disaster, the United States mobilized to help our friends in Japan. At the peak of Operation Tomodachi—our single, largest bilateral military operation with Japan ever—the Department of Defense had 24,000 personnel, 190 aircraft, and 24 Navy ships supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. One year later, we remain committed to assist the people of Japan to rebuild. This effort, led by the Japanese Government, has benefited from the compassion of the American people, who in difficult economic times have given generously to help. Today, U.S. experts continue to support Japan's ongoing efforts to deal with the challenges associated with Fukushima, and the TOMODACHI public-private partnership is investing in the next generation to strengthen cultural and economic ties. We are grateful for the contributions of Americans, civilian and military, who have joined with people from around the world to support Japan's recovery.

No one can forget the tragic images of disaster in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami or the heartbreak of friends who lost homes, belongings, and most importantly, loved ones. Even as it works to rebuild its devastated northeastern region, Japan has never wavered from its steadfast commitment to help other countries around the world. So on this day when our thoughts and prayers are with the Japanese people in remembrance of the hardship faced 1 year ago, let us also celebrate the recovery underway in Japan and pay tribute to Japan's unflagging dedication to bettering the lives of others throughout the world. The friendship and alliance between our two nations is unshakeable and, going forward, the people of Japan will continue to have an enduring partner in the United States.

Categories: Statements by the President : Japan, earthquake and tsunami, first anniversary.

Subjects: Japan : Earthquake and tsunami, damage and recovery efforts; Japan : Economic cooperation with U.S.; Japan : Nuclear power plants in Fukushima; Japan : Relations with U.S.; Japan : U.S. assistance; Japan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Natural disasters : Japan, earthquake and tsunami; Obama, Michelle; Voluntarism.

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